GE Task Force: Background


The General Education Task Force (GETF) was formed to review the results of GE Program Review, consult with stakeholders, provide recommendations regarding a new vision for GE at Cal Poly. The Provost provided five specific imperatives when outlining the GETF’s charge:
GE Task Force: Charge

1. To envision a meaningful and coherent GE program that provides students with the opportunity to understand themselves, their place in the world, and their field of study.

2. To design a comprehensible GE program whose value and structure are clearly evident to students, staff, and faculty.

3. To provide GE program flexibility to prevent unnecessary barriers to student degree progress.

4. To integrate considerations of diversity and inclusion, using Cal Poly’s Diversity Learning Objectives and U.S. Cultural Pluralism Policy as starting points for discussion.

5. To internationalize the GE program in content and by providing increased opportunities for students to develop language and cultural competency skills.
GE Task Force: Membership

The Provost formed the 17-person GETF in February 2017. The GETF included students, faculty, and staff members representing all six of Cal Poly’s colleges as well as the General Education Governance Board (GEGB), the Office of University Diversity and Inclusion, University Advising, University Registrar, and Academic Programs and Planning.
GE Task Force: Work

Between February 2017 and June 2018, GETF members:


• Studied CSU Executive Order 1100 (“General Education Breadth Requirements”) and the revised version (EO 1100-R) of August 2017.

• Held 27 meetings, a half-day retreat, and a summer reading circle.

• Researched best practices in GE programs throughout the U.S. and Canada.

• Met 36 times with student, faculty, and staff groups representing GE stakeholders throughout Cal Poly to solicit feedback: hopes, concerns, and ideas for GE redesign.

• Held four public design charrettes in May 2018 to present draft GE recommendations and solicit feedback.

• Consulted regularly with representatives of Academic Programs and Planning, the Academic Senate, and the GEGB.
GE Task Force: Guiding Principles

The GETF developed a set of guiding principles based on internal discussions, discussions with the GEGB, conversations with stakeholders, research into current best practices, and recommendations from GE Program Review.

The following principles helped guide the task force during deliberations and the development of program recommendations:
GE Task Force: Guiding Principles

The GETF seeks a Cal Poly General Education Program that:

1. Provides a structure that enables, encourages, and strengthens meaning making.

2. Strives to make its structure and requirements clear to all stakeholders.

3. Advances the university mission by emphasizing values inherent in diversity and inclusivity.

4. Builds upon our unique strengths as a comprehensive polytechnic institution and distinguishes itself through innovation, Learn By Doing, and collaboration.

5. Evolves, adapts, and improves through the use of well-defined educational objectives, efficient assessment, and evidence-based decision-making.
GE Task Force: Recommendations

Based on continued discussions and feedback collected during the May 2018 design charrettes, the GETF developed a final list of eleven (11) recommendations, which are divided into five areas:

I. Curriculum Structure
II. Pathways and Integration
III. Pedagogy and Course Design
IV. Message and Outreach
V. Program Management and Assessment
GE Task Force: Recommendations

I. Curriculum Structure

1. Reevaluate and redesign the GE subject area educational objectives.

2. Require learning related to diversity and inclusion in all GE subject areas.

3. Establish a single GE curriculum that (as much as is possible) is consistent for all Cal Poly students.
II. Pathways and Integration

1. Integrate interdisciplinary learning opportunities and experiences into GE to address contemporary issues and real-world problems at the lower- and upper-division levels.

2. Create combinations of 2-7 linked GE courses in different subject areas to provide students with opportunities to make more coherent and meaningful connections, and to provide students with opportunities to complete formal pathways and/or minors.
GE Task Force: Recommendations

III. Pedagogy and Course Design

1. Champion and support the broad application of Learn By Doing pedagogies and high-impact learning practices in GE.
GE Task Force: Recommendations

IV. Message and Outreach

1. Incorporate content and/or advising into foundational, lower-division GE courses to foster student learning related to GE mission, objectives, structure, value, and experiences.

2. Redesign advising tools (e.g., curriculum sheets, degree flowcharts, PolyProfile, dashboards, DPR, etc.) to illustrate and promote an integrative, meaningful, and connected GE curriculum.

3. Rename the Cal Poly “General Education” Program to better reflect its goals, objectives, and strengths, and have all campus materials refer to GE subject areas and subareas by their names (rather than letters and numbers).

4. Select and mentor GE liaisons, ambassadors, advocates, or advisors (students, faculty, and staff) in each campus program, department, and college.
GE Task Force: Recommendations

V. Program Management and Assessment

1. Provide the GE Program with the resources necessary to support a full-time director/chair, a staff member, and office space, thus allowing for the appropriate expansion of administrative responsibilities under the GE Program (e.g., redesign of GE subject areas, development and management of pilot initiatives, advocacy efforts, course renewal, enrollment management, scheduling, space and learning environment issues, innovative and sustainable assessment, etc.).
GE Task Force: Recommendation Details

The recommendations are described in more detail in the GETF recommendation report. This report includes separate worksheets for each recommendation that summarize the following:

• Guiding principles informing the recommendation;
• Program development options and additional background information regarding the recommendation and ideas regarding implementation;
• Rationale for the recommendation;
• Potential challenges and concerns during development and implementation of the recommendation; and
• A low, medium, or high priority ranking for the recommendation, as defined by the GETF members.